

# Miscellaneous Hitt Notes

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## **Germanna Immigrant Name Changes**

There has been considerable controversy over the "anglicizing" of the names of the first Germanna Colony in Virginia. Every name that was changed in America, such as Cuntze to Coons, can be found with both the "anglicized " and German spellings in records and documents. This, however, is not the case with Peter Hitt. The Hitt name is always spelled "Hitt" (except for minor misspellings) on deeds, wills, civil actions, etc.; never is the "Heite " spelling used in the records. There is no proof that "Heite" was changed to "Hitt" in America. If you search German records, both Hitt and Heite spellings will be found which would lead one to believe that these are different, and possibly unrelated, families.

The name "Hitt" is found in English records that date from 1398 to the present, and could date to pre-Norman days. No proof has been found that the English Hitts were German nor that the English name "Hitt" was derived from the German name "Heite". One example of an English Hitt line is that of Henry Hitt of Woodbury, Connecticut (see: Descendants of Henry Hitt of Woodbury, Connecticut, by Maurice R. Hitt, Jr., C.G., Published by Windswept Press, Interlaken, New York, 1993.) A theory has occurred to at least one Peter Hitt researcher that Peter Hitt could have been living in London when the 1714 colony arrived there from Germany. Being an enterprising young man, Peter could have seized the opportunity for free passage to America and joined the 1714 Colony. If this were true, it would go a long way in answering questions about Peter Hitt.

## **Peter Hitt in New York ?**

A Peter Hitt ? was found in New York in 1709, two years after Peter Heite married Maria Liesbeth Fruedenberg. This man was actually Peter Heyd (I have also seen references to Peter Heidt) NOT Peter Hitt, who came to America, married here, and returned to Germany where he died without family. His marriage and death is documented in: The Palatine Families of New York, by Henry Z. Jones, F.A.G.S.

## **Earliest Peter Hitt Document**

The earliest document that includes Peter Hitt's name is that of Joseph Cowntz (Coons) Will which was dated on 18 October 1730 (See Stafford Co. VA Will Book 1729-48, p. 22-3). This will was witnessed by Hitt, Holtzclaw, Martin, and Kemper, all first colony members. It should be noted that Peter witnessed the will with his mark, which looks like a large "P".

Peter Hitt used his "mark" on all records and documents that have been found; no record has been found that he signed with his name. This could lead to the conclusion that Peter could neither read or write the English or German languages, since either would have been acceptable to Colonial officials.

## **Peter Hitt's Birth Date**

Because some believe that Peter Hitt is NOT Peter Heite, son of Johann Jacob Heite, his birth date is unknown. However, the date can be estimated using generally accepted formulas based upon one of three events: the year of marriage, the year of birth of a first child, or the year of birth of another child. Using the year of birth of Peter Hitt's first child, 1715, we can estimate his birth as follows:

$$\text{Year of birth} = 1715 - 25 = 1690.$$

If the above is even close, Peter would have been one of the youngest members of the 1714 Colony when he arrived in Virginia. The ages of the members of the 1714 Colony on arrival in Virginia would be as follows:

|                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Fishback, b. 1661, age 53  | Brumbach, b. 1685, age 29 |
| Utterbach, b. 1664, age 50 | HITT, b. 1690, age 24     |
| Weaver, b. 1667, age 47    | Martin, b. 1691, age 23   |
| Cuntze, b. 1674, age 40    | Kemper, b. 1692, age 22   |
| Spillman, b. 1679, age 35  | Hoffman, b. 1692, age 22  |
| Holtzclaw, b. 1683, age 31 |                           |

## **Proudfoot - Hitt Link.**

Jesse Martin Hitt, an early Hitt family researcher, was the Librarian for the State of Washington. He left numerous paper records of his work, which is stored in the archives of Washington State. Because Jesse's research is in the form of loose papers and notes, it is not readily available to most Hitt family

researchers. Jesse, or perhaps another researcher, privately published some of Jesse Martin Hitt's family records and they are available in the Public Library in Los Angeles, California.

Jesse worked on the Proudfoot family, but never found a link between Lenore(Leonore) Hitt and John Proudfoot. It seems unlikely that Lenore is a Hitt, most likely a Hite or Hilt. John Proudfoot came from York Co., PA which is the same area where the Hiltts settled. No evidence has been found that even suggests a tie between Lenore and any Hitt of or from Fauquier Co., VA., although some researchers continue to believe that Lenore descends from Peter Hitt. Should anyone have information that can positively link, or not link, Lenore Hitt to the Proudfoot family, please E-Mail the author of these notes.

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